

Which Type of College is Best for You?

The myOptions Team

College is the universal term that describes all types of post high school institutions. Under the college umbrella, you will find that you have lots of options. We broke down the most common types to help you determine which is the best fit to help you achieve your future goals.

Private Colleges/Universities

If you like the idea of seeing familiar faces everywhere you turn and having easy access to your professors, a private college/university may be for you. These are 4-year schools that do not receive government funding to operate. Instead, they rely mainly on tuition, fees, and private sources of funding. The private donations they receive can sometimes allow these schools to provide generous financial aid packages that will help offset the cost of tuition and fees to make them more comparable price-wise with public schools.

Public Colleges/Universities

If you want to go to a school that's much bigger than your high school and you are completely comfortable not knowing most people on campus, then a public college/university may be a good option. These are 4-year schools that receive funding from the government allowing them to offer lower tuition and fees. Public schools will classify for their students as either "in-state" or "out-of-state" for tuition purposes. In-state residents will pay lower tuition since their tax dollars are supporting that institution.

Junior/Community College

Are you looking to knock out your basic courses and then transfer to a 4-year school OR are you looking at a career that only requires a 2-year degree? If you answered "yes" to either of those questions, you should consider a junior/community college. These colleges are 2-year schools that typically offer courses parallel to the freshmen and sophomore offerings at four-year schools. Admission is open access, meaning if you apply and meet all basic requirements, you will be admitted. It is important to note although the school may be open access, certain specialized programs may have special requirements and may be limited on the amount of students that can enroll, so the school may implement selective admissions for those programs. The pricetag for these colleges will be lower than private or public 4-year institutions because they don't offer as many amenities, like a huge recreation center or large-scale campus-wide programming like concerts that you may find on your 4-year campus.

Liberal Arts Colleges

If you want to dabble in a little bit of everything on a small campus, you may want to look for a liberal arts college. Chances are if you are looking at four-year private colleges, you will encounter the term "liberal arts college" pretty frequently. Liberal arts colleges maintain a diverse curriculum to ensure you are a well-rounded student regardless of your major. As a student at a liberal arts college, you can expect to take courses in subjects like literature, history, languages, math, and science as a complement to courses within your major.

Vocational or Technical School

Are you considering a career in a highly specialized field like welding, culinary arts, or dental hygiene? Vocational or technical schools offers programs for certification and training within highly specialized areas that lead directly into a career in a short amount of time.

If you already have a career in mind, you can work backwards to understand the type of education and training you will need to land a job in that field to determine which type of college will fit you best. If you are unsure of what career you want to pursue (which is totally fine), you are better off selecting a school that has a wide variety of offerings, so chances are no matter which career you land on, they will have a program available for you. Whichever type of school you decide to attend, be sure to do a lot of research, like checking out accreditation status, financial aid opportunities, and students' outcomes to ensure the school you select is the best investment for your future!

<https://myoptions.org/advice/which-type-of-college-is-best-for-you-460>